

WOMEN AT OXFORD.

IT was suggested long ago that the best way to measure the height of a civilization was by the status of its women. Viewed in this manner, the relative position of most countries, past and present, is about the same as that in which they are placed by public opinion in our own nation. The few exceptions which run counter to popular judgment appear to come nearer to the truth than does the latter. Thus, for example, measured by the status of its women, Rome enjoyed a higher civilization than did Greece. In the Middle Ages the Italian republics seemed to have been head and shoulders above their numerous and more powerful compeers. At the present time the United States leads the list, with Great Britain second, followed closely by Germany and Switzerland. Most of the other European nations are scarcely in the race at all. France and Italy, Spain and Portugal, Austria and Turkey, Russia and Belgium, are all in the same condition, so far as women are concerned, that they were fifty or seventy-five years ago. There is, of course, some difference, but the difference is so small as to be insignificant.

In Spain and Portugal the condition of the sex is scarcely different from what it was two centuries ago, except that physically and physiologically it has degenerated in nearly every part of those two kingdoms. In Great Britain the progress of womanhood has not been marked by such sudden advances and great leaps as it has in the domains of Uncle Sam. It has been

more gradual. A careful comparison will show that there has been a striking similarity in development between the two great heads of the English-speaking race. In each the common law restrictions upon women have been abolished, or modified by degrees, until to-day when woman enjoys the personal liberty and a legal individualism that is almost complete. While England has not gone so far as such States as New York, Massachusetts, Ohio, Illinois, and Kansas, she is far in advance of North and South Carolina, Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico. In the higher education of woman, England started before America, and made considerable progress. Then the latter country came forward, and bending all its energies to the work, passed England in the last decade.

At the present time each is progressing in superb style, with America a trifle ahead. Each land has its own advantages. In England there is a magnificent mechanism already in existence, which can be utilized by women the same as it has been from time immemorial by men. This mechanism should be estimated in the broadest and most liberal manner. It consists not only of the ancient universities of Oxford and Cambridge, but the newer universities, the women's colleges, such as Newnham and Girton; the high-grade private schools, with which all the English cities abound; the British Museum and the public and private museums, galleries, libraries, and technical schools. Another advantage is the



"Tom Quad" and Tower.



Martyrs' Memorial Hall.

compactness of the tight little island in which the trouble and expense of travel to scholars are reduced to a minimum. In the United States the advantages are of a different nature. There is, first, a more universal love of the higher education for the sex, which expresses itself in the establishment of State universities, colleges, and institutes, as well as in such munificent benefactions as Vassar, Cornell, Emma Willard, Pratt, and Chicago University; the long list of scholarships which are now open to women in the schools of the land; the heavy and remunerative patronage of such institutions as the Packer Institute, Wellesley, Oberlin, Smith, Teachers', Mount Holyoke, and Radcliffe; the extraordinary number of small benefactions in money, books, pictures, educational apparatus, scientific specimens, objects in natural history and physics, bronzes, statuary, and the one hundred and one details which go to furnish the modern

college or to embellish, illustrate, and improve college work. Last, and probably most efficient of all, is the increasing demand for highly educated women as teachers and professional workers. It is obvious, however, that each country is approaching the other. The other American universities are either admitting women direct to their undergraduate classes, or else, like Columbia and Harvard, they establish or become interested in annexing such as Barnard and the Teachers' by the former, and Radcliffe by the latter. These correspond very closely to the famous Association for Promoting the Education of Women in Oxford. Another resemblance is to be seen in the greatly augmented post-graduate optional and special courses for women on both sides of the Atlantic. It is possible in both lands to-day for a talented young woman to start where the male alumnus of 1870 finished his education, and to pursue a curriculum extending from three to seven years in duration. The chief differences are that the higher edu-

cation of women in America costs considerably more than it does in England (which is, of course, a disadvantage), and that female students do not enjoy the same liberty and independence in England that they do in America. In the older country both college etiquette and society insist upon some sort of a chaperon, guardian, or elder relative to preserve the conventionalities of life, while in America the tendency is to accord the female student the same confidence and trust that it does to her brother. The English system increases the unnecessary activity and care of student life, and therefore tends to impair the excellence of the scholar's work.

Oxford has long been a favorite institution for the English people, male and female. A brief perusal of its records shows that there are women among its most distinguished founders and donors, and that the sex has taken an intense interest in all the schools

and colleges which make up that famous university from the moment that the records were kept. In the present progressive century, a large number of women whose brothers, husbands, or sons were matriculates have kept up the same studies at home as their relatives were pursuing in the colleges at Oxford, and at the end of the four years' course were probably as well trained and as capable of passing the final examinations as were the latter. A large number of women eminent in literary or social life in the first two-thirds of the century had taken this curriculum, and refer to it, in their after years, as a source of both the highest benefit and the greatest delight.

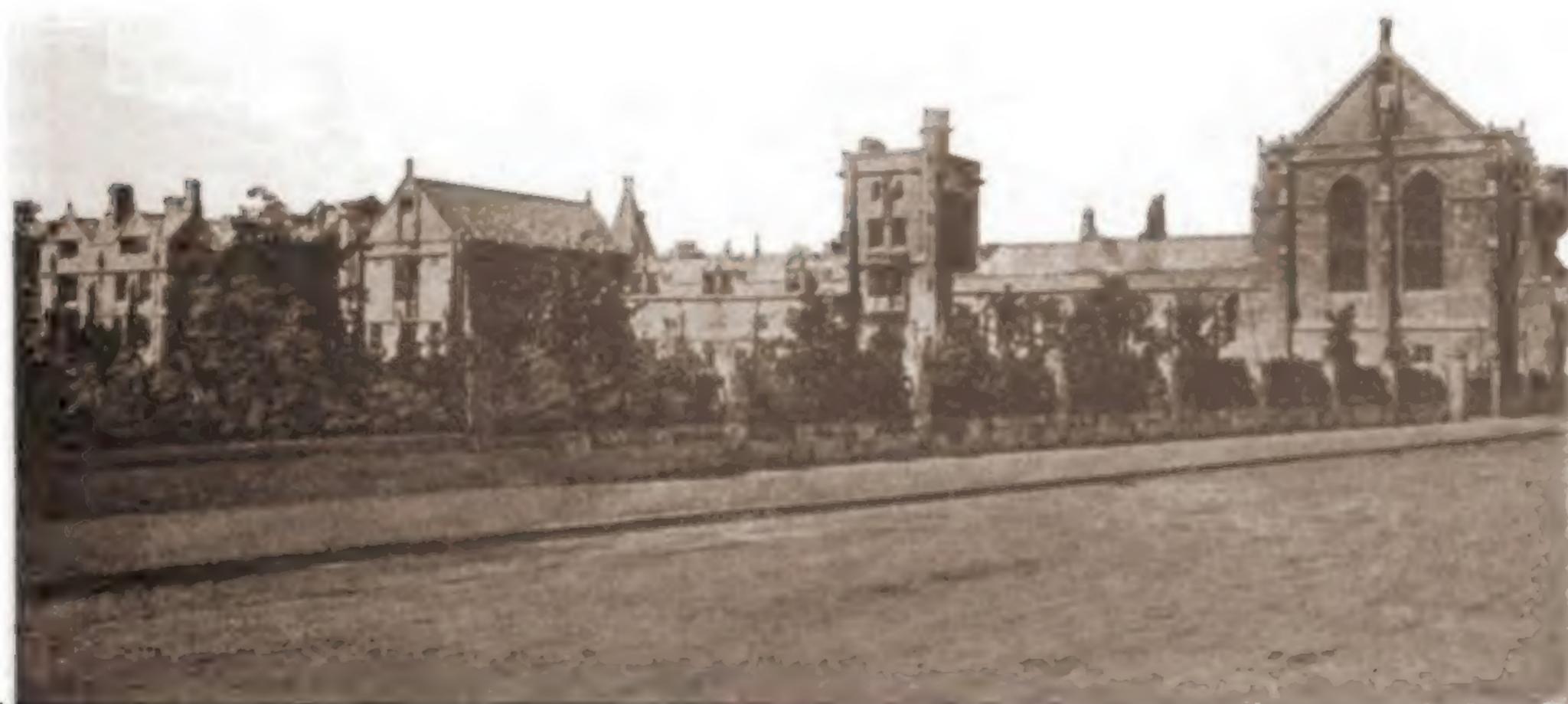
In 1850 there was even a Greek reading-club in Oxford, composed exclusively of women. From time to time ambitious and talented girls applied for admission to the various schools which compose the University, and were uniformly refused. The first great step forward was made in 1864, when a number of women, of whom all, or nearly all, resided in the city of Oxford, started a society or club, looking toward their own higher education.



Interior of Christ Church.

The matter was discussed first among themselves, and afterward with liberal-minded clergymen and professors, whom they called in to take part in their councils. It took form in 1865, when they established a scheme of lectures and classes for women. It was upon a small scale, but was quite successful. Among the lecturers who aided these energetic pioneers were the Reverend Mark Pattison, who afterward became Rector of Lincoln; Professor H. Nettleship,

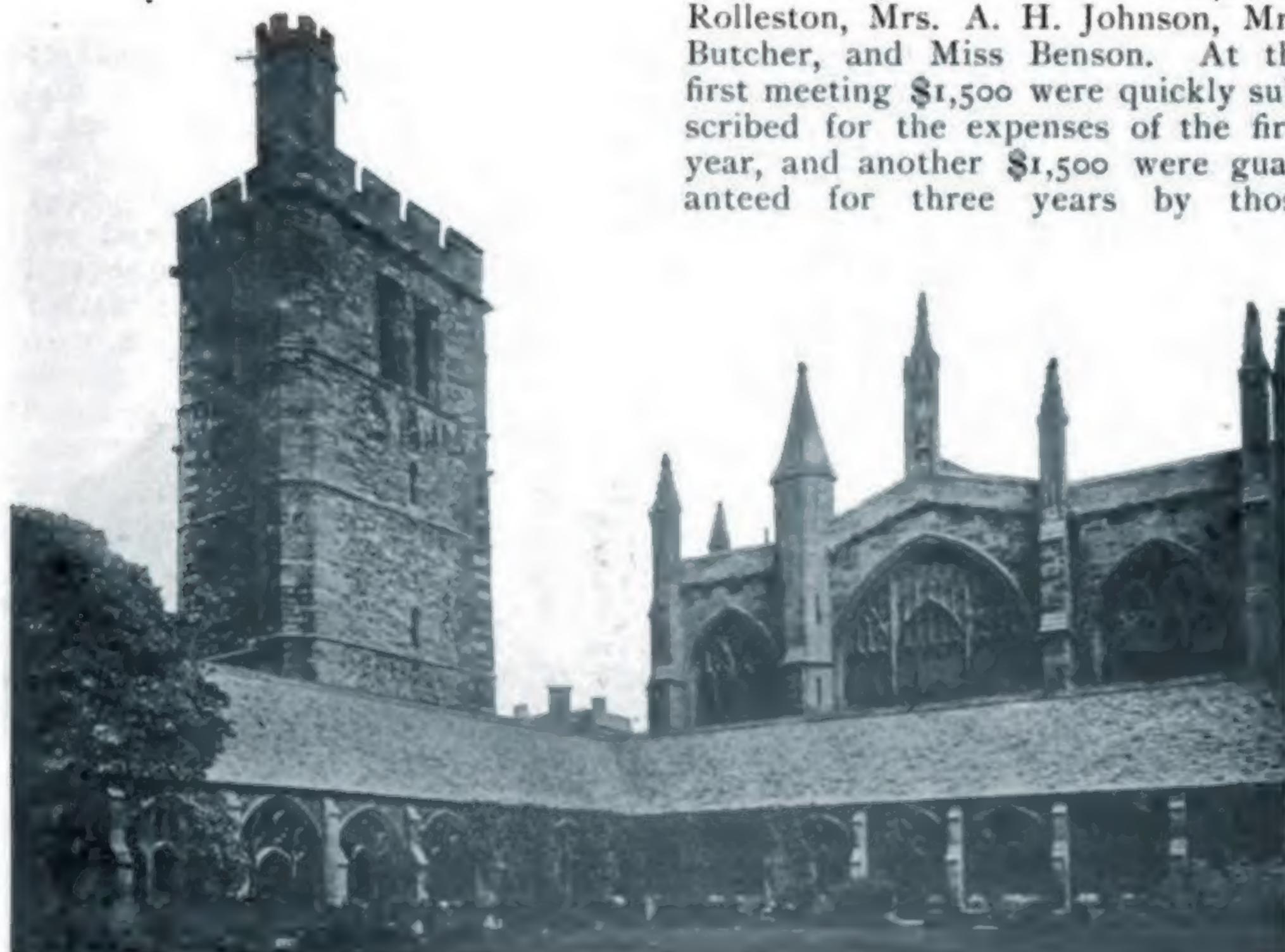
scholar; Professor W. C. Sidgwick, the celebrated mathematician, and other teachers of smaller eminence. Odd to relate, the scheme was treated as a matter of course. It did not arouse much enthusiasm on the one hand, nor encounter appreciable antagonism on the other. The conservative spirit of Oxford regarded it as a compliment to the literary and classical influence of the University, and when it was discovered that the lectures were upon a very high plane, and that many of the students intended to follow pedagogy as a calling, it rather approved the scheme. The system continued several years, but was finally merged in that



Mansfield College.

which now prevails. It was narrow, but may be summed up as an excellent plan for finishing or polishing teachers of a high class rather than as an education for women in general. The next movement occurred in 1873, with a committee of ladies of very high standing, including Mrs. Max Müller, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Mrs. Creighton, and Mrs. T. H. Green. This was a broader and stronger effort, and brought forward such well-known characters as Professor Stubbs, the historian and present Bishop of Oxford; Mrs. F. Millicent Fawcett, the famous scholar and wife of the great statesman, and some twelve of the ablest instructors in the University. Classes were held in languages, mathematics, history, and political science. This second scheme was much more successful than the first, and on account of its high social status, and the support it received from the great dignitaries of the church as well as of the University, met with no opposition. It grew

in popularity and in numbers, and became a feature of Oxford life. On June 4, 1878, it made a great leap forward when it undertook to form an Association for the Education of Women. This was done at a public meeting held on the date mentioned, at Keble College, upon the advice of Professor Rolleston. Committees were appointed, and on June 22d the association which now exists was brought into being. Among the eminent men who took part in this decisive step were the Reverend H. D. Harper, Principal of Jesus College; Professor Nettleship; the Reverend E. S. Talbot, Warden of Keble College; the Reverend Mark Pattison, Rector of Lincoln; Professor Bonamy Price, professor of political economy; Professor Thorold Rogers, the statistician; the Reverend H. S. Holland; the Reverend G. G. Bradley, Master of the University, and the Reverend H. G. Woods. Among the women of prominence were the Hon. Mrs. Vernon Harcourt, Mrs. A. H. D. Ackland, Mrs. Bartholomew Price, Miss Smith, Mrs. T. H. Ward, Mrs. Rolleston, Mrs. A. H. Johnson, Mrs. Butcher, and Miss Benson. At the first meeting \$1,500 were quickly subscribed for the expenses of the first year, and another \$1,500 were guaranteed for three years by those

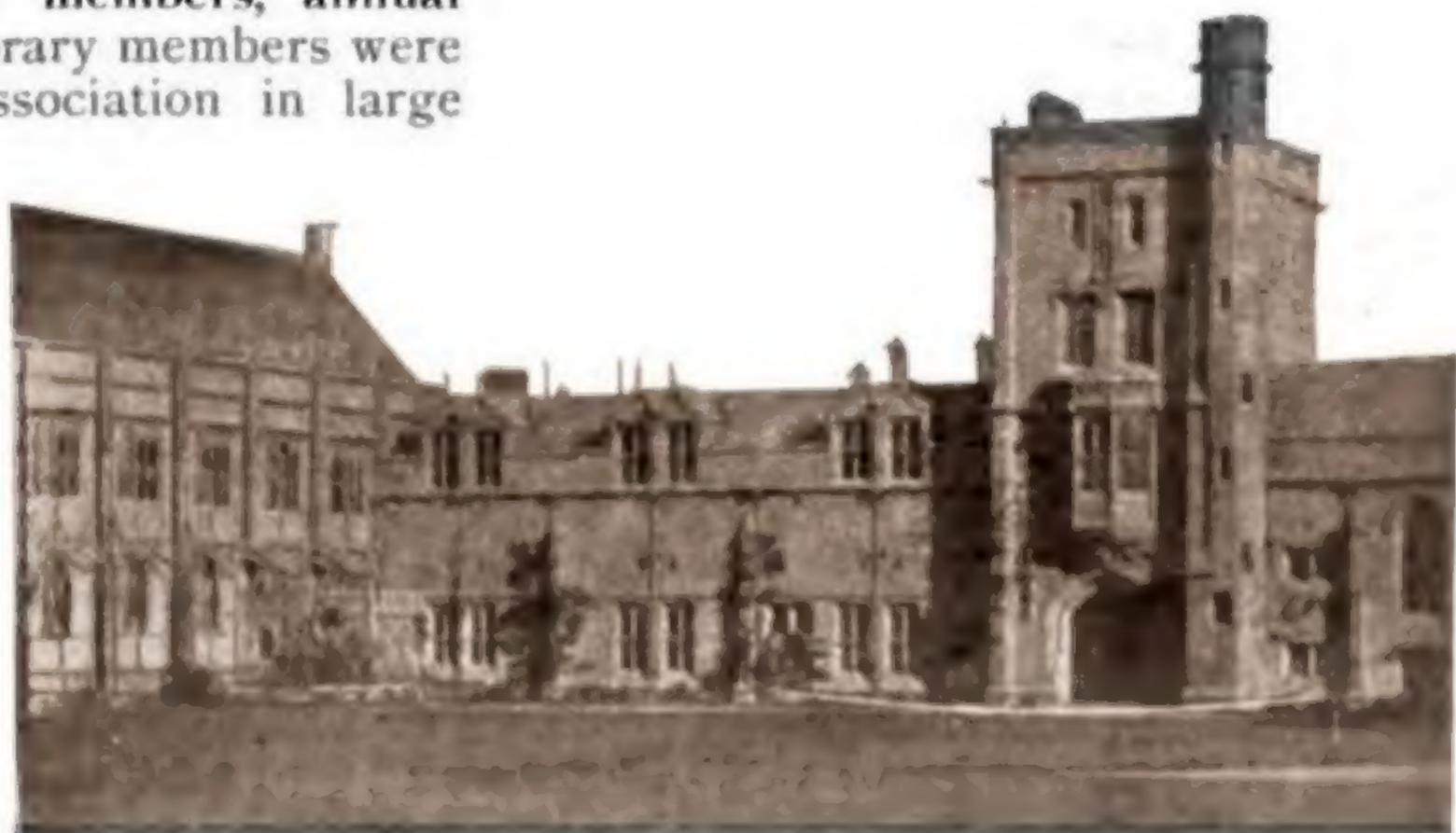


New College Cloisters and Tower.

present, and two scholarships were founded—one of \$175 per year and one of \$225, each for three years. The association worked hard, organizing and interesting people in the cause and securing support in one way and another, and started its full course in October, 1879, with thirteen courses in study. These were in English history for honors, and in English history for passing; in English literature for honors; in English language for honors; English essays, political economy, logic, mathematics, mathematics for honors, Latin and Greek; German literature, philology, grammar, and composition; French literature, language, and composition, and the elements of chemistry. The officers this first year consisted of Mrs. Arthur Ackland, Miss Benson, Mrs. Arthur Johnson, Miss Clara Pater, Miss Smith, Mrs. Humphry Ward, the Reverend Mark Pattison, the Reverend E. S. Talbot, the Reverend G. W. Kitchin, the Reverend W. W. Jackson, Professor Nettleship, and A. Robinson. The president was the Reverend G. G. Bradley, the honorary treasurer, Mrs. Bartholomew Price, and the honorary secretaries, Mrs. T. H. Greene and S. H. Butcher. These sixteen directors deserve to be remembered by the women of Great Britain. They not alone served faithfully and well, but they subscribed with great liberality, and worked indefatigably to make the experiment a success. The number of students rapidly increased, life members, annual members, and honorary members were secured for the association in large numbers; honorary advisors were likewise called in until, at the close of the first school year, the association had become a gratifying and laudable success. The two scholarships for the first year were carried off by Miss Roberts and Miss Pearson. In 1880

one college opened its doors partially to the association by permitting the members to attend one course of lectures. This process has gone on steadily ever since until to-day, when nearly every college in Oxford has extended the privilege to one or more courses.

In 1883 the Chautauqua system was adopted by the association, and the now justly famous system of teaching by correspondence was introduced into Great Britain, the chief organizer in the movement being Mrs. Ewing, who was made honorary secretary for that department. In 1887 a course of training for teachers, including work in a practising school, was commenced under honorary professor, Mrs. Scott. This system was borrowed in part from the Swiss, and has since been adopted and extended by the great Teachers' College of New York. In 1893 the work of the association had grown so large that changes were made in the organization in order to secure greater efficiency. The work of the committee was readjusted, and the name council adopted to indicate its general administrative character. Many of its functions were transferred to a standing committee, appointed for the purpose, and called the Educational Committee. This consisted of the secretaries and treasurer of the association, not less than three of its tutors or professors, and the principals



A View of Mansfield Hall.

of the halls employed by the women. Oxford University, for the first time, took official cognizance of the matter by appointing the Dean of Christ Church to sit as its representative in the council of the association. It had taken eighteen years to carry this point, and great was the rejoicing for the brave women and the noble men who had carried on the struggle during that period. To the American mind the mere appointment of a university officer to sit in the society as the official representative of another organization does not possess much significance, but in England it is very different. The mere appointment of the representative meant official recognition, friendship, protection, and material aid. The selection of a high church dignitary, such as the Dean of Christ Church, was of equal importance, because it expressed the attitude of the Church of England toward this new movement. The two together, added to the opening of the lecture halls to the students, to the paid or contributed services of the tutors, demonstrators, and professors of the various colleges, made the association an affiliate, if not a regular member of the great group of institutions of learning which constitute the University of Oxford.

This was still further followed by the Vice-Chancellor of the University taking a room in the premises of the association, wherein he sits as an advisor and friend of the council.

Prior to 1884 the only examinations open to the association student were those specially provided by the delegates of local examinations. In that year the council secured a handsome petition signed by all of its own members and a small army of alumni. It



Holman Hunt's Picture of Christ, Keble College.

was considered by the authorities, and after careful deliberation they passed an ordinance opening to the women students honor moderations and final honor schools of mathematics, science, and modern history. Another step was taken in 1886, when women students were admitted to responses; in 1890 to the honor school of jurisprudence and the final examinations of Bachelor of Music; in 1893 to the honor schools of theology, oriental studies, and the examination for Doctor of Music, and in 1894 to all the examinations for the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Such is a brief sketch of the growth of the

association named. In numbers its growth has been very marked. In 1865 there were about twenty-five women who started the first scheme, and in 1878 the number had grown to nearly one hundred. To-day the students number three hundred and forty-seven, and the association two hundred and twenty-five, making a grand total of five hundred and seventy-two who are carrying on the work of the higher education of women in England's great University.

The general management of the association is very simple. It views its students as junior members of the same family, and endeavors to aid them in their progress in every way. While the students themselves reside in regular college halls or in private houses, as they prefer, they are surrounded at all times by influences of the best class. There is recreation in moderate amount, but of a very high grade, such as the best music, reading, concerts, debating societies, and literary, artistic, and scientific clubs. The association tries as far as is possible to

turn everything into an inducement toward study and intellectual work. Nothing, for example, could be more alluring to a young woman with artistic tendencies than a scholarship which will give her one or two more years of study in Italy or in Greece, or to a woman with a love for oriental literature than a scholarship in a German or Swiss university, under one of the great masters of philology. In this manner the Oxford girl graduates have taken post-graduate courses, and secured post-graduate honors, in many of the most famous institutions of both England and the Continent.

The students are attached in general to one of three halls. Of these the first is Lady Margaret Hall, which was founded in 1878 and opened in 1879. It is a neat and attractive building thoroughly furnished and equipped, and accommodates seventy-four student members and also thirty-seven students, making a total of one hundred and eleven. It offers from three to five scholarships in open competition each year, ranging in amount from one hundred and twenty-five dollars to two hundred and fifty dollars. The second, and larger one, is Somerville College, which was founded as Somerville Hall in 1879 and opened in that year. Its name was changed to its present form in 1894. It accommodates sixty student members and sixty-three

students. It is quite rich in scholarships, and offers from three to four, and as many exhibitions for annual competition. In addition to this there are three special scholarships of three years each of two hundred and fifty dollars a year; a Pfeiffer scholarship of two hundred and fifty dollars a year; a Gilchrist scholarship, of two hundred and fifty dollars a year, and a Mary Conybeare scholarship, for classics, of two hundred and fifty dollars a year. This makes a total of from nine to ten scholarships a year, and four exhibitions for what we Americans would term prize examinations. St. Hugh's Hall was founded in May, 1886, and accommodates twenty-two student members and twenty-four students, making a total of forty-six. No less than sixty-seven so-called home students are unattached to any of the halls. Provision was made for this class by the association as far back as 1879. They have their own principal and also several semi-official halls or homes, among which the two chief are St. Kentigern's hostel and St. Hilda's hostel.

A number of the students reside in private homes, with the families of the tutors or other people engaged in the University. In fact, nearly all of the ancient city of Oxford is nothing more or less than one great collegiate family. The cost of living and tuition is very small. Many of the students



Brazenose College.

manage to get along comfortably upon two hundred and fifty dollars a year. This, of course, simply means the scholastic, and not the calendar, year. There are three terms to each year—Michaelmas, Lent, and Summer. Each begins on a Saturday, usually

in the middle of October, January, and April. The general course of education as administered by the association is double in character. One part is conducted by the tutors, lecturers, and teachers of the association itself. These are divided into seven great branches: first, belles-lettres; second, Latin and Greek languages and literature; third, mathematics and physics; fourth, natural science; fifth, modern history; sixth, English; and seventh, modern languages. The instruction in these is very much the same as that given in the same fields at Columbia and Harvard, except that a little more attention is paid to modern history, English, and modern languages. The courses in French and German are particularly thorough, and when faithfully pursued make the graduate an expert in both the speech and the literature of those important tongues.

Etymology and philology receive the most careful attention, and are taught as sciences rather than as parts of grammar. The other branch of education consists of lectures delivered in the colleges themselves. They cover a very wide range of topics, and include the Celtic, Slavonic, Arabic, Hebrew, and Sanskrit languages and literature; political and social economy, sociology, Egyptology, and early Greek, archaeol-



Newton-from-the-Fields.

ogy, ethnology, anthropology, and biology. In addition to the regular classes in the more abstruse subjects, there are also special classes and special readings with tutors and professors. It is hardly necessary to add that the students appre-

ciate the splendid opportunities offered to them, and take advantage of them to the best of their ability. In the twenty odd years there have been few or no complaints of idleness, neglect, or violation of duty, but on the other hand there have been quite a number of instances in which the officers were compelled to step in and protest against over-study and over-work on the part of their scholars. This is particularly the case in mathematics and the classics, where girls have been known to devote twelve and fourteen hours a day to their books and papers. The association keeps a sharp eye upon all such people, and insists upon the students taking proper care of themselves physically, and of taking the rest, exercise, recreation, and sleep which experience has found requisite to a successful collegiate career. As they pass beyond the general curriculum the students display the same variety of scholastic taste as do men under similar circumstances. Thus, of the long array of graduates from the association there have been women who have made their mark in theology, biblical criticism, Egyptology, Hellenic antiquities, Sanskrit literature, Anglo-Saxon poetry, old High German and middle High German languages, old Slavonic, ancient law, calculus, astronomical computation, and

historical researches. They have carried off such varying degrees as Doctor of Music, Doctor of Literature, Doctor of Legal Laws, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Medicine, and Doctor of Theology, Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, Bachelor of Science, and Master of Science. The only degrees for

are remarkably neat and attractive, and the residences are notable for their comfort, cosiness, style, and elegance. The country in every direction is strikingly fertile, and is cultivated to the utmost. It abounds in beautiful walks and inspiring drives. Railways give prompt communication with every part



A Corner of Magdalen College.

which they do not seem to have shown any taste are the three great engineering degrees of Civil Engineer, Mechanical Engineer, and Engineer of Mines. The life of the Oxford girl student is almost ideal in its comfort and happiness. The city itself is remarkably beautiful, clean, and healthful. The streets and roads are faultless, and, in the main, embowered with superb old trees, whose branches have shadowed generation after generation of students. The business establishments

of England and Scotland. The college buildings are noted for their beauty, antiquity, and the associations with which they are surrounded. Brasenose and Magdalen, the Tom Quad and Tower, the New Church and Martyr's Memorial, St. John's and Mansfield, Newton and Keble, Lincoln and Lady Margaret, are all notable specimens of the various schools of English architecture. There is hardly a period but whose styles are to be found in Oxford. The low and heavy Saxon,

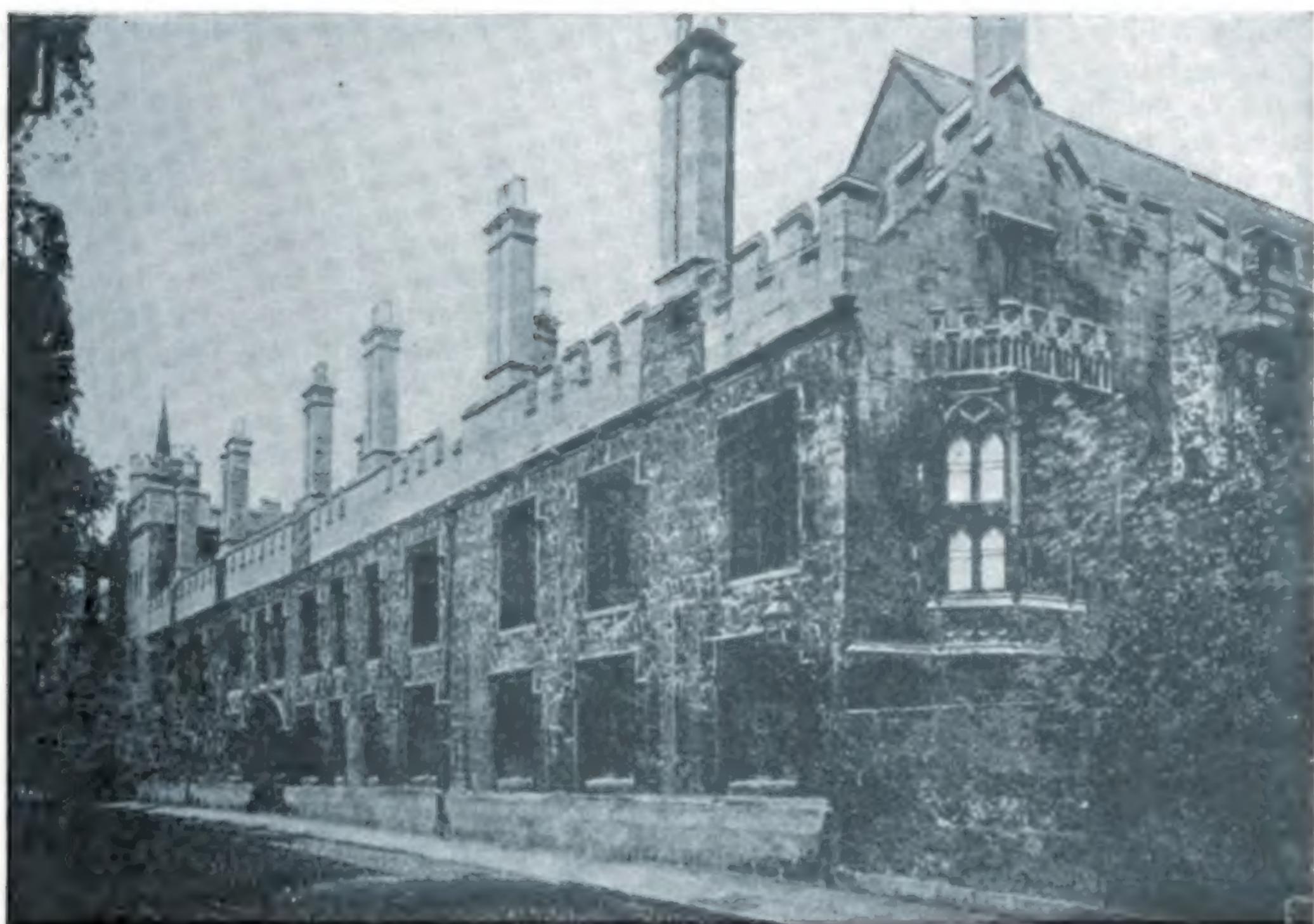
the lighter and more graceful Norman, the sedate Elizabethan, the quaint Tudor, the Renaissance and Queen Anne, the Gothic, and even Flemish are admirably illustrated in the numerous edifices which make the city a joy to the student of architecture. Time has dealt lightly with even the oldest of the buildings, and its ravages have been checked and undone by the constant care of the college officials. So great is the attention paid in this respect that many of the old halls and colleges seem almost neat and trim and new when a hundred yards distant. It is only in close quarters that you can see how the wind and rain, snow and sleet, have changed sharp points into rounded curves, and angular mouldings into graceful swelling lines and contours. This is particularly the case with the Elizabethan buildings, where the mullions and drip stones, once edged and severe, are now rounded into quaint, almost serpentine lines. If the exteriors of the buildings are fascinating what shall be said of the interiors? Here are portraits and busts, reliefs and statues of great scholars and distinguished graduates ranging from to-day back into the dead centuries. Here are libraries so superb and complete as to attract the scholars and book-worms of the entire world. Here are archives and cabinets full of priceless literary and historical treasures. Here are chairs and settles, rooms and houses made famous by their occupants. Here are magnificent paintings, stained-glass windows, exquisite altars, and immortal monuments. Here in tangible form are the wealth, the culture, and the intellectual progress of Great Britain for many centuries.

And here the American woman has made her home along with her trans-Atlantic kindred. In the inns and hotels there are always energetic and bright-eyed sight-seers from New York and Chicago, Philadelphia and St. Louis. In the little boarding-houses are women who come to sketch and paint the numberless views of the city, the colleges, and the surrounding country; young female musicians who

come to consult or study under some master of the art; littérateurs who come to listen to the leaders of scholastic thought.

There are also student members and home students and lecture students. They come and go, but as fast as they leave their places are filled with others, and the number is always increasing. It is pretty difficult to estimate how many there are there at any time. There may be five in a regular class and seven more who simply come in for special lectures. There may be two in another class and ten who are pursuing the same study under tutors and professors. But there are always American girls here, and girls of whom we may well be proud. They were a surprise at first to our English cousins, and a disappointment. What the people of Oxford expected we shall never know. Probably they expected nothing in particular, but any number of unpleasant things in general. The American woman student was, to their mind, a blue-stocking, wore spectacles, and talked through her nose. She was an independent daughter of the New World, who wore bloomers and had a horror of gloves. She was a noisy, slovenly, and vociferous person who made her work-room a scene of nocturnal clamor until long after midnight. These are a few of the things expected, and which never came. Instead of these they found first one, and then a score, and then a hundred of young women, pretty, well dressed, well gloved and booted, refined, modest, low-speaking, and altogether sweet and womanly. They found the American woman student to be ambitious, industrious, capable, and intellectually very quick. After two or three years they took a great fancy to the new-comers, and to-day and ever since have treated them like their own daughters. One good old housewife in Oxford said to me: "If it weren't for you wearing French boots and 'aving a slight haccent we couldn't tell you from our Henglish girls."

Nearly all who go across to Oxford are graduates of our own institutions, and make the journey for the sake of



Lincoln College.

special study in certain fields, or to review and round out what they have already learned at home. Others come to study systems of teaching in order to master the various schools of pedagogy. Still others come for the sake of change and variety from what they are accustomed to in the New World. All do well, all have done well. Many have made their mark at Oxford, and have left names which are pointed out with pride to visitors from abroad. Among these are Evangeline Hathaway, of Woodford's Corner, near Portland, Me., a Wellesley alumnus, one of the best general scholars that ever came out of Oxford. Another is Miss Ball, a Cornell graduate, who, after a brilliant course in Oxford, went to Greece, where she perfected her studies in the language of that land, and then came back to America to join the talented staff of professors of Vassar. Still another is Miss Fenshaw, dean of the American College for Women in Constantinople. She was the first woman to study theology at Oxford, and is now

herself an erudite professor of theology, biblical criticism, and Christian evidences; and there is Miss Bowen, who holds a scholarship from the Chicago University, and is now working to secure the title of Ph.D. With a still more striking record is Miss Sara Rogers, who is a B.A. of Columbia, an M.A. of Cornell, and a Ph.D. of Yale. She is making a specialty at Oxford of international law, and will go from Oxford to Berlin to finish her training as a jurist and jurisconsult. Still another talented girl is Miss Tremaine, formerly professor of History in the University of Nebraska. From Wellesley comes not alone Miss Hathaway, but also Miss Belle Sherwin, Miss Martha McCaulley, Miss Mary E. Ward, Miss Batcheller, Miss Talcott, an alumnus of Smith College, and Miss Baldwin, of Bradford Seminary.

The American energy has displayed itself in many ways in Oxford, but in none more pleasantly than the establishment of an American club composed of male and female students of the Uni-

versity. They meet regularly, and on Thanksgiving Day and other national holidays celebrate with even more enthusiasm than they would at home. To Miss Baldwin is due most of the credit for this happy innovation.

So far as the scholastic advantages are concerned it may be questioned if Oxford offers any more than do our greatest institutions. The highest courses pursued by any one of the colleges in that great city are no higher than those of Bryn Mawr on the one side, or of Columbia and Harvard on the other. Its chief advantage is the change and relief it affords the student. The climate is balmy and delightful, the food-supply bountiful and cheap, the water-supply faultless, and the sanitation of the modern type. Life there is easier, quieter, and slower than on this side of the Atlantic under our high pressured civilization. For a woman, and for a man the same, who has passed three or four years in the intermediary schools at home, and followed this with the regular curriculum of an American college, a trip to Oxford and a year or two of study within its generous threshold is a source of inexpressible delight. It would be the same thing for an Eng-

lishman or an Englishwoman who had passed seven or eight years in school and college to come over here and spend one or two years at one of our great institutions of learning. The mere change of atmosphere and associations is a benefit which cannot be measured in dollars and cents. Besides this, there is a change which can hardly be expressed in words, in the tone and style of thought, which tend to broaden the mind and increase wisdom. Nearly all of our American girls who have graduated in England have not only made their mark in that land, but have been very successful in after life, no matter whether it was in the country of their birth or in other fields. Travel in itself is a course of invaluable study, as is also residence in a foreign land. These are afforded by Oxford in a manner which cannot be surpassed. It is pleasant to reflect that the city in which the lamp of learning was first lighted in England, the city which gave so many learned men in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to our colonial ancestors, should to-day be the first in the higher education of women, and should be the Alma Mater of so many of the daughters of the New World.

Margherita Arlina Hamm.

